1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

PROBLEMS OF ADAPTATION

The description of the political system of modern Bida has illustrated the relation between the social structure of Nupe society and the new Native Administration, the points of harmony as well as of divergence and conflict. I have just formulated one of the graver conflicts; we recognize it as one of the central problems of this analysis, the problem of cultural and social diversity versus political unification.

Modern conditions have re-designed the cultural map of Nupe country. Roads, railways, and river steamers demarcate new areas of communication and intercourse. The scope of economic co-operation has widened immensely, far beyond the political boundaries of Nupe. Important trade centres, nuclei of a new, cosmopolitan Nigeria, with their large colonies of strangers, have arisen on railway lines, motor-roads, near river ports or river bridges: Badeggi, on the railway, is such an example, or Baro on railway and river, and Jebba where the railway bridge crosses the Niger. New cultural centres are forming in the villages which are the seats of District Heads, Native Courts, schools, dispensaries, and trading-posts of the big merchant companies of Nigeria. But this development above all emphasizes anew the cultural and social gulf between Bida and the country. Bida is more than ever the seat of 'civilization' and learning, art, and fashion, the residence of the wealthiest traders and of the new ruling class—the salaried officials of the Native Administration. Bida harbours the highest school of the Province, a hospital, the workshops of the Public Works Department which give employment to many, the large 'canteens' of the European trading companies. It represents again, on a new plane, the 'core' of the kingdom, the area of social life close to the 'powers that be'. Modern Nupe has re-defined the old conflict between cultural diversity and political unification, it has not eliminated it. In the political sphere the Government is attempting to do justice to this vital problem by admitting commoners and peasants to responsible offices in the central administration. I have ventured to point out certain weaknesses inherent in this experiment. But the question of the success or lack of success which is likely to meet this administrative experiment is less significant than the fundamental question which of the two principles of social and cultural development these administrative reforms are envisaging, a strengthening of unification and centralization, or support and preservation of the social identity of village communities and cultures. The former tendency has been the trend of the historical development of the Nupe state (as of any state); it has also become almost an accomplished fact in the other spheres of present-day development, in economic progress and in the centralization which is part of educational and health policy. The choice is thus, I think, in reality taken out of the hands of the Government. But whatever policy is adopted, it can, for the present, mean little more than a preliminary arrangement. The final solution cannot be found in the realm of political organization; it will arise—and this our survey of the political history of Nupe kingdom has taught us—from cultural commonness itself. One of the main instruments for achieving this cultural

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

178 commonness in modern Nupe is planned *education*. A twofold plan of education: an ever-increasing spread of general education, disseminating the elements of modern civilization which so far have remained a prerogative of the few, among town people and villagers, people of rank and commoners alike; and also a reformulation of the higher education in the capital, so as to make it less specialized and bring it more into harmony with the culture of the country at large, to make it less an expression of exclusive, class-conscious 'town culture', and more an instrument of understanding for Nupe, writ large. Only when this development is complete will the rigid, exclusive class boundaries be dissolved; only then will the *tálaka*, the Poor One, be able fully to stand on his own feet, to have his share in the administration of his country, and to dispense finally with those links of clientship and patronage which so far have been his only weapons to overcome the vulnerability of his position. On this new plane the question of centralization *versus* independent local administration may then be reopened, and with more prospect of a permanent successful settlement. A peasant once said to me: 'I send all my children to school, then they will be able to read and they will know what it says on tax-receipts and fine-tickets. No more cheating or extorting money then!' Put it in this crude and a little aggressive manner, or call it education as a 'means of cultural unification', it means the same thing.

In the town and its rigidly stratified society our problem takes a slightly different form. The question how to transform exclusively political domination into a system with more equal, more 'democratic' distribution of political influence and responsibility reappears as the problem of social mobility. The social mobility of the Nupe class system, restricted as it was under traditional conditions, has been restricted further and at the same time diverted into new channels by the modern development. Of the vast bureaucracy of the kingdom only comparatively few ranks and offices could find a place in the new society and could thus maintain together with the symbols of rank their social significance. True there are a number of newly-created offices and posts under the newly-created Native Administration: the post of *Ma'aji*, Treasurer, posts as teachers in Middle School and elementary schools, posts of clerks, scribes, N.A. 'Mallams', messengers attached to the various offices, and so forth. But the more important of these modern posts demand modern education, which at present has been enjoyed only by a small minority. It is a convincing proof of the fact that this minority is still to a large extent drawn from the classes of the nobility that almost all important N.A. offices, down to scribes and messengers, are in the hands of what have been for a century the privileged classes of Nupe.

War, the paramount factor of promotion and inter-class mobility, has disappeared; free competition, individual success, are almost excluded as channels of a social career. The system of offices is more exclusive to-day than it had been in feudal Nupe. The comprehensive scheme of promotion which used to embrace the whole scale of Nupe society is reduced to insignificance by the exigencies of specialized training and by

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

the changed conception of office and responsibility. The Administration itself is undecided in its attitude to the question of promotion and career. Certain distinguished state offices were granted in accordance with the traditional conception of a social career, that is, to men who had attained a high position on the native rank scale. Such are the appointments of *Maiyaki*, *Ndeji*, and the Town Councillors of Bida. But other offices have been bestowed *ad personam*, for special ability, irrespective of the traditional rank or promotion. Thus, a former Head Teacher of Bida Middle School was raised to the position of something like a 'Chief Secretary' of the Emirate, and given the (Mallam-) title *Naibi*. Or the *Ndgya*, a member of the *gitsú* nobility, has been made a member of the Emir's council, although according to traditional practice membership of the *Etsu*'s council was reserved for the *sarakiži*, the military or civil ranks. The only promotion with universal application (and sure of universal appreciation) is promotion in salary. Fixed wages have become almost the only officially recognized symbols of social career. How then will class distinctions and inter-class movement re-establish themselves in modern Nupe? How will the native society adjust its conception of those paramount values in their cultural life, promotion, and status to the new situation?

The attitude of the people towards these questions is ambiguous and undecided—the typical attitude towards changing values. It is interesting to study the attitude of the young men of to-day, including those who have enjoyed the highest education the Emirate can supply, in Bida Middle School, towards the occupations which are open to them. It seems of little account to them whether they obtain the position of a clerk, an office messenger, or some other obscure post, or whether they are called to fill the post of a teacher or a responsible political official, as long as their appointment carries a salary. Again and again men of intelligence and high standing have said to me: 'All our native ranks and titles mean nothing to-day; what has meaning are only offices under the N.A., posts which carry real influence and wealth.' Yet it would be incorrect to infer from such statements as this that the traditional system of ranks and the whole concept of promotion and mobility are losing their vitality and significance. The class distinctions of Nupe are reduced to-day to distinctions of status devoid of their former economic and political significance; what seems to have remained intact is only the outer shell, a rigid empty structure. Yet I have often been surprised to see how little the meaning of this structure has been affected.

When I was in Bida a rich trader was just making all possible efforts to entrench himself in the position of a favourite of the king, and he was put down accordingly by 'those who knew' as the next candidate for promotion to a *saraki* rank. I have seen three vacancies occur among the higher ranks of the nobility; I have witnessed the ensuing party feuds, the passionate play of interests, the bartering for support and influence —all these signs of a changed social atmosphere which can be characteristic only of a system still intensely alive. And one of those enlightened, sophisticated informants who deprecated the traditional ranks and titles was the hero of the following story: I have just mentioned that the

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

178

former Head Teacher of Bida Middle School, a very able (though unscrupulous) man, had been attached for some time to the Administration in a very distinguished official position, with the title of *Naibi*. When he was dismissed from his post for malversation the new Head Teacher definitely expected to be appointed *Naibi* and even approached his superior officer officially to help him secure this post, to which, according to precedent, he felt entitled. This example is deeply characteristic. It shows that that fundamental trend in Nupe society is still alive: it reveals the anxious search for traces of a routine of promotion to which the people had adjusted their life, and the eagerness to rediscover in the new society in which they are living the paramount social value of their culture.

If the restriction of social mobility and the reduction in the number of official positions under modern rule have caused this moral uncertainty in the ruling classes, indirectly they threaten to unsettle the morale of the people at large. Not only because they render promotion from the lowest orders of the society so difficult, but because they have thrown out of gear the whole machinery of inter-class relationship. Many of the channels through which public opinion—the desires and grievances of the people—used to find its way to the ears of the rulers of the country have been rendered useless; clientship and similar forms of political attachment can no longer promise protection when the large majority of the men whom native society had endowed with status and rank can no longer claim any official standing. Or rather, the channels still exist and still continue to function in their way, but they have been forced underground, and they function in the subterranean sphere of intrigues and scheming. The Government, supporting those whom it has appointed, cannot stoop to recognize an authority resting only on the fluid, ill-defined loyalties involved in patronage and clientship. The former wide distribution of political influence, combined with the system of comprehensive promotion, had secured a fairly efficient 'balance of power', and this 'balance of power' the powerless masses could turn to their advantage through the institution of clientship. The rigid present-day system ranges its authority exclusively behind the few men to whom it entrusts its offices; it must brand all other efforts at political influence as disturbing and even dangerous.

I have a concrete case in mind: a man of highest status in the native society, highly educated (in the Mohammedan sense), who was regarded by a large number of people, in the town as well as in the districts, as their patron and adviser in many questions. However, holding no official position, he was regarded by the *Etsu* and his entourage as an interloper, an unwelcome meddler in state affairs; and an over-cautious Administrator described him officially as a 'subversive element'. In a sense, he was that; he had been forced into this position, since the influence which he attempted to exercise in favour of his clients and followers had to work outside, and not infrequently against, the established system. Yet had the rigidity of the present system not excluded him from an official position I have no doubt that he would have been able to use his influence over the people to the benefit of the country.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

I need not enlarge upon the dangers of such subterranean activity—subterranean through no fault of the people themselves. The terrible flare-up in the witchcraft trial of 1931 is a lesson not easily to be forgotten. A remedy? I have suggested one above, couched modestly in a footnote: bring these channels into the open daylight; let the people themselves elect, periodically, at least in Bida town, their official representatives—Town Councillors in official nomenclature, People's Representatives in a wider sense.

That the people are equal to this task I need not elaborate further; nor would the group of likely candidates be too large and thus render an election difficult. The dangers involved in the solution which I suggest —the dangers of faction politics and intrigues—would be easily controlled once the whole network of relationships lies on the surface. However, one might object to my suggestion on the ground that it tends to keep alive the serf-like link of patronage which should rather be discouraged. To this I would reply, first: the personal link of patronage, little as it may appeal to the modern moral conscience, is for the present the only link of political representation that promises success. For the masses of the Nupe people as they are to-day, unenlightened, only too conscious of their weak position, economically and socially, it would be futile to attempt to find representatives in their own midst—they would be puppets in the hands of the experienced and infinitely better equipped ruling group. And second: a solution such as I have suggested would be most easily adapted to improved social conditions, that is, to a community with a universally higher level of enlightenment. Much more easily, in fact, than a system with carefully selected representatives whose position of confidence among the people is never put to a test. For the solution here suggested looks towards the future; it embodies one of the most vital elements on which the social achievements of the native peoples will finally depend, namely, political education—that training in political responsibility to the achievement of which the colonial policy of this country is irrevocably pledged.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

themselves make use of these secondary resources which they find on their land.

We may mention, finally, the various uses to which uncultivated land in the town—streets and open spaces in Bida or the larger villages—is put: women may put up little 'kitchens' by the roadside, where they cook food and sell it to passers-by; traders or craftsmen may build themselves a small hut to be used as workshop or booth; or neighbours may get together and build one of the little mosques on the open space between their houses, which you find scattered all over Bida town. No permission is necessary for these modest buildings. For larger enterprises, a big mosque, or a market, the *Etsu* in Bida or, in the village, the chief, would himself allot the necessary space. This practice includes modern requirements as well: thus *Etsu* Mohamadu, who had shown great sympathy for the work of the C.M.S. Mission, gave them a space for building a school and a compound inside Bida, in his own *ekpă* of the town, free of charge.

LIVE STOCK

Cattle-keeping plays a very secondary part in Nupe economics. This is shown most clearly in the very low *per capita* figures quoted in the statistical table at the end of this section. To-day cattle are owned only by the butchers who buy for the kill from the Bornu and Fulani cattle-traders who, with their huge herds, pass regularly through Nupe and Bida, on their way from the north and the south. I say 'to-day', because formerly many of the members of the Nupe aristocracy and the more wealthy among the Bida people used to own large herds of cattle.[1] Slaves taken from the Bororó-Fulani, the nomadic Fulani herdsmen, looked after the cattle. The cattle were always kept outside the town, frequently a long distance away; for they had to be moved from pasture to pasture according to the season, up north, away from the tsetse-infested area near the rivers, in the rains, and south again in the dry season. This meant, obviously, much trouble and cost, and this is mostly quoted as the reason which made the Nupe eventually abandon cattle-keeping altogether. *U de wahalla*, 'it is a great trouble', was the explanation given to me by the *Alkali* of Bida when I expressed my astonishment that it was so difficult nowadays to find people ready to buy a herd of cattle. I have known two cattle-owners—the last in Nupe; one was an ex-slave who died without heir in 1936 and left a herd of thirty-two head of cattle which at the time was tended for him by Fulani herdsmen who had their camp near Bida. It was at his death that the question arose where to find a buyer for the herd. The other cattle-owner was the late *Etsu* of Agaie, a Fulani by birth, who owned a large herd of very beautiful cattle, of over 200 head, which was tended by Nupe shepherds, the sons of ex-slaves of the *Etsu*.

I may, perhaps, add here an historical note: The cattle of the *Etsu* of Agaie were not, like the cattle to be seen at present in Nupe, of the

[1] Laird and Oldfield refer to the huge herds of cattle which they saw in the capital of Nupe kingdom, Rabá.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

233 northern, humped, breed. They were humpless and of small build, evi-
178 dently related to the dwarf cattle which exist to-day in certain areas in eastern and south-eastern Nigeria. These dwarf cattle are said to have been very widespread in eastern and northern Nupe country before the Fulani conquest; the Gbari, for example, maintain that they had owned, originally, large herds of these cattle which, to-day, have almost disappeared in this region. The traditions of Nupe speak of a magic connected with a bull or a cow with which the ancestor-king Tsoede endowed the first Beni chiefs. The *hetsá* ritual on the Niger river demanded the sacrifice of a bull, to be presented annually by the chief of the Kyedye. Evidently, these rites and sacrifices could only have referred to these dwarf, pre-Fulani cattle. Anyhow, there is no evidence that cattle have ever played any important part in the economy of the peasant areas, and possibly in the whole pre-Fulani kingdom.

233 The disappearance of cattle, however, from the Fulani-Nupe, and
471 from the households of the rich, demands explanation. No doubt the 'great trouble' has played some part in this change. With the disappear-
177 ance of slavery the problem of finding suitable and sufficiently cheap labour presented an additional difficulty. But the decision to abandon cattle-keeping was also due to a decided change in the attitude of the people towards this commodity. The herds of cattle were, in a word, capital. The Nupe do not live on the cattle, basing their diet on milk and butter, as the Fulani and other cattle people do. Nor are the cattle in Nupe linked to a whole system of religious beliefs, taboos, and ceremonial usages. The *Etsu* of Agaie (on whose herd I could examine these questions in detail) occasionally sold one or two head of cattle when he was in need of money—this was the only concrete use to which he or any of the Nupe cattle-owners would put their cattle. I cannot judge how far status and prestige may have formerly entered into this assessment of the value of cattle. I gathered that it could not have been of much significance; the possession of horses counted for much more. But the existing incentives to possess cattle must have been further weakened, and even reversed, by two changes in the present-day economic situation. First, by the enormous rise in the price of cattle, especially in the countries south of Nupe, which came with the increased (European and Europeanized) demand for meat and skins. Second, by the appearance of new means of economic enterprise, and the prospects of more profitable, large-scale trade, which necessitated a more liquid form of capital. It is a fact that a large number of rich cattle-owners soon sold their herds, attracted by the high price, and also realizing most probably the greater advantage that, under modern conditions, lay in transforming their stock into ready money.

231 This tendency to keep the capital 'liquid' is shown also in the readiness of the Nupe to experiment with different kinds of live stock. Thus we find here and there—and the same thing is reported from Nupe a hundred years ago—ostriches, which the Nupe buy from traders from the north, feed and tend and finally sell again with a profit. An enterprising chief had even taken to breeding horses; it was done on a very small scale, and was in Nupe an isolated case, but still characteristic of

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

type of cultivation only would lay himself open at once to the criticism of his fellow farmers. As regards cassava, it is known to have little nutritive value—'only yam or millet or sorghum make a man strong'. Both crops may, however, provide a useful stopgap for the time between the harvest of the main crops.

We have said earlier in this book that the complexity of the agricultural system of the Nupe is due partly to the close contact they have had with other cultures, in particular with neighbouring groups. We realize here that this was more than an occasional contact, and more also than some obscure process of diffusion. It was to a large extent part of that assimilation and cultural 'learning' that goes hand in hand with intensive political unification of long standing and all that it entails—regular intercourse, a wide net of transport and traffic, and an ever-extending economic co-operation. As the kingdom brought together peoples from the marsh-land and from the inland forests, farmers from the 'yam countries' and farmers from the 'millet districts', it made them learn from each other and at the same time utilize each other's special resources. Assimilation and specialization are both features of an expanding economic area. We have, in fact, a threefold correlation; for these two features involve another, third, factor: a large-scale system of organized distribution, that is, trade and marketing.

FARMING TECHNIQUE

Like most African tribes the Nupe practise hoe-agriculture. They use two kinds of hoes, a large heavy type called *zuku*, and a small type called *dugba*. The *zuku* has a heavy handle, about 16 in. long, bent somewhat like a hook, into the angle of which the broad shovel-like blade (8 in. long) is fitted. The *dugba* has a straight handle, 20 in. long, with a less broad, slightly bent blade inserted at the end. The heavy hoe is used for throwing up mounds and ridges, the lighter hoe mainly for weeding and other less heavy work. The Nupe also use a long bush-knife, *gada* (now mostly of European manufacture), for cutting grain stalks or digging out yam.

When using the heavy hoe the farmer stands across the ridge he is making, with legs wide apart, the body bent forward, and, gripping the handle of the hoe with both hands, he lifts it to the level of his head and shoulders and brings it down again between his legs, with one swing digging up the earth and throwing it behind him on to the mound or ridge he is preparing. When the mound or ridge has reached the proper height, he moves a few steps forward to repeat this action, until the ridge extends to the edge of the field. Having finished one ridge, the farmer turns round to throw up the next, parallel, ridge.

Nupe cultivation works both with large round mounds and low long ridges; the mounds are 2–3 ft. high and about 3 ft. in diameter, and are arranged in long rows; the mounds are spaced (measured from top to top) about 4–5 ft. in the same row and 6 ft. from row to row. The ridges are 1 ft. high and are drawn, more or less straight, right across the field in parallel lines about 3 ft. apart. The two types of cultivation are used

: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

eating together and constitutes one *ménage* coincides in fact with the *efakó*-unit. The *efakó* head further pays the tax for his co-workers and is also expected to make himself responsible for establishing them socially when they have reached full adulthood, i.e. he will enable them to get married, by paying their bride-price. By allotting to the co-workers from earliest youth an individual plot for *bucá* work or allowing them the time for other *bucá* enterprises, he also puts them in the position of earning an independent income. They use it, as I have said, for their personal wants over and above those catered for by the family head—what we may call the small luxuries of life. When they desire to leave the *efakó* group and set up for themselves the family head finally provides the members of his group with the necessary 'capital' in the form of the tools which they may take with them, food for the first year while their new land does not yet bear crops, and, above all, in form of the parcel of family land which he allots to them as their own property. In order to do all this the family head must be able not only to draw on regular supplies of agricultural produce from the family land but also to avail himself of certain commodities of exchange and that universal medium of exchange, money. He must plan his money expenditure and accumulate reserves which can alone enable him to pay the large bride-price (which is always in money) when the time comes. The resources of the family working-unit thus gain the significance of capital proper, invested in the maintenance of labour; without it, without the prospect of fulfilling all these economic obligations towards the members of the working-unit, the *efakó* group cannot be maintained satisfactorily.

Here we come back to the decline or disintegration of the family working-unit under modern conditions which we have outlined in the beginning of this section. Now, every co-operative group must to some extent reckon with a periodical and temporary disintegration, that is, with the necessity of periodically readjusting its body of workers, replacing those who have died or are too old or who for other reasons desire to leave the group and to admit new, young members in their place. This is done through the twofold mechanism of inheritance and succession, and of release with regard to members who leave the group to work on their own. We shall examine inheritance and succession later; here it will suffice to say that in the Nupe system of inheritance the family farm goes to the relation next in seniority, younger brother or eldest son (in the classificatory sense). As regards the release of members from the group, the rule used to be that junior members remained in the *efakó* until they had more than two wives and more than two or three children. In the last five to ten years, however, many large *efakó* groups were dissolved after the death of the family head, and the family land, instead of being worked jointly by the remaining members of the family under the new head, was divided up among the various individuals who now work independently each on his own land. Moreover, nowadays young men who have just married frequently decline to stay in the *efakó*-unit and demand to be given a separate farm. I have noted many cases of this kind, in all parts of Nupe, in which the dissolution of the *efakó* group occurred between six and ten years ago.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

241 592 178 How are we to explain this comparatively sudden change? Viewing it from the general economic point of view all the advantages seem to be on the side of a large labour-unit: our discussion of the agricultural technique of the country has taught us that a large labour group represents, in Nupe, the only means of cultivating a large variety of both useful and profitable crops. Moreover, a large *efakó*-unit assures a certain measure of leisure to the family head and the old men in general, by enabling them to leave a large proportion of the actual work to the younger generation. It assures also a better distribution of responsibility, counting more adults among its members than does the small working-unit. It utilizes more fully the important incentive of competition and is, finally, of great educational value; for only in large labour-units are the young boys likely to work regularly in the company of others of their own age.

241 592 178 461 But if from point of view of group efficiency and security the large working-unit appears superior to the small (say) one- or two-men 'group', it is not necessarily so when looked at from the viewpoint of the individual. Take the question of leisure and distribution of responsibility. In one of the instances in which I found a large *efakó*-unit having been dissolved recently (six years ago), after the death of the family head, I was given this as the reason of the change: the new family head, the eldest of five brothers, had availed himself liberally of the privilege of leisure which his position implied, and frequently went hunting while the others were working on the farm. Now, while they had accepted the same arrangement under the old family head, their father, they declined to accord this privilege to their eldest brother, and preferred to dissolve the whole unit and work each for himself. To-day, working on their own, the individual family members have a comparatively larger measure of freedom and leisure, which they are free to use as they like. They can use their own discretion in planning the farm-work: of the five brothers two have taken to spend their spare time in making mats, a leisure-time occupation which, they assured me, is financially very advantageous to them; one has left the village; and the family head himself can still spend part of his time in hunting. Against the considerations of group efficiency thus stand individual considerations of gain, which provide another, and in some respects very different, standard of appreciation by which to measure the value of the large labour-unit. The word 'gain' should not be understood in too narrow a sense. Freedom of movement, freedom to choose a different profession (we remember, for example, the openings which the political life of the capital offered to young men of adventurous spirit), even freedom to enjoy one's leisure independent of the dictates of family requirements—these spiritual values appear under certain circumstances as tempting to the younger generation as does the prospect of material gain.

The two standards of appreciation will coincide where the *efakó* group is in a position to guarantee the satisfaction of all needs and demands which the group-members might feel. Nupe family co-operation in farm-work, once apparently more satisfactorily adjusted, is now failing in this respect. This failure can be attributed to two different develop-

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

ments: to an increase in the needs and demands on the part of the individual members with which the system of family co-operation failed to cope; or to a decline in the efficiency of the group to maintain its former standards of maintenance. The Nupe *efakó* system has, in fact, failed on both accounts. As regards the first, a large variety of new needs and wants, temptations and values have spread, primarily from the town, and have begun to transform the original peasant culture; as regards the second, the family head is to-day frequently unable to meet out of the family income two financial demands which are regarded as essential to the *efakó* concept, the payment of the bride-price and the payment of tax for the individual members of the *efakó* group.

Certain of the influences which have thus led to the decline of the large working-unit are no doubt due to factors of modern culture change. Yet it would be wrong to regard the change in the structure of the working-unit merely as a result of the outside influence of culture contact. The structural change forms part of a much wider phenomenon; it is the result of an intrinsic economic development, namely, the readjustment between productive organization and needs existing in the society. If the change were due exclusively to culture contact we should expect to find the larger working-unit preserved only in backward, 'unsophisticated', districts. This is not the case. The table on p. 243 showed that three households out of fifty had working-units composed of more than four adults. Of these three households only one belongs to a backward area—the household of the chief of Doko. The two other examples come both from one of the most progressive places in Nupe, Lemu, and from a group of farmers who, as mentioned before, have but recently undertaken the cultivation of a new commercial crop, red pepper, to replace another commercial crop, ground-nuts, which had not proved an economic success. A large working group is essential to the cultivation of this new crop. In these two households the young men have remained in the *efakó*, content with their position, while the family head, in turn, is able to provide bride-price and tax-money. Here, then, culture contact so far from being responsible for the dissolution of the large working-unit has on the contrary supplied a type of production which enables the large working-unit to maintain itself; paradoxically, culture contact has placed the *efakó*-unit in a position to satisfy those very demands and needs which culture contact has newly imposed upon the society. However, these instances from Lemu are exceptional: neither in Mokwa, the centre of ground-nut cultivation, nor in Kutigi, where cotton is grown on a comparatively large scale, has the large *efakó* group survived. The exceptional cases which I have discovered are too few to warrant a more far-reaching, systematic explanation. Moreover, whereas in this case attractions and temptations appealing to the younger generation are partly responsible for the social change, individual differences must play a considerable part. We can only tentatively point to a certain negative evidence: the absence of some of these 'temptations' in Lemu which have made the younger generation in Mokwa and Kutigi claim an early economic independence. Lemu is neither a centre of native trade, nor does a profitable alternative

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

241 592 178 occupation to farm-work (e.g. a handicraft, carried out in one's leisure-time) exist there, nor, finally, has its connexion with the political life of the town ever been as strong as in those other places.

COLLECTIVE LABOUR

241 476 The co-operation of the *efakó* group is more or less regularly supplemented by a system of mutual assistance and large-scale collective labour among the villagers, an institution which the Nupe have in common with all other Nigerian tribes. Its help is enlisted in all cases in which the *efakó* group by itself would be insufficient to secure efficient cultivation —be it because of its smallness, or an unforeseen obstacle such as illness among its members, or irregular rains,[1] or simply because its ambitious programme demands larger co-operation than is at its disposal. The Nupe have two systems of collective labour devised to operate in different situations: *egbe* (the Hausa *gaya*) and *dzolo*.

The *egbe* is the more general type of collective labour. It is not limited to farm-work, but is organized for every kind of work which demands large-scale co-operation and specially for work done, not for one household alone, but for the community at large. Thus the building or roofing of a big house, for example the chief's house, repairs of a bush-bridge or a stretch of road which is maintained by the village, are carried out in *egbe* work; repairs of the town wall, formerly, and repairs of the building of a Native Administration rest-house, to-day, are equally typical occasions for the *egbe*. However, in Bida and in many larger places a large proportion of work of this kind has now been taken over by professional labour. But in Bida as well as in the hinterland farm *egbe* is still practised regularly.

561 476 241 The help of *egbe* for farming is enlisted mostly for tilling and the first and second weeding, more rarely for the third weeding and the clearing of new yam-plots. A few days before the *egbe* is to take place the young men of the family go round to their friends and neighbours and invite them to the *egbe* on such and such a day. *Egbe* work is on the whole work for the younger people. A ready frame for their co-operation exists in the age-grade associations of which all the young men of a district are members. As they arrange throughout the year meetings and feasts in which they all join, they now organize the collective farm-work for one of their fellow member's family. The family head sends out a special invitation to drummers and musicians to play at the *egbe*. The accompaniment of music plays a very important part. Finally, the host prepares food and beer for the feast with which the *egbe* invariably ends.

[533] Early in the morning drummers and flute-players walk out to the farm on which the *egbe* is to take place. They play and sing while they walk, beating on their drums the characteristic rhythm of *egbe* music, and everyone who meets them knows at once their destination. Some of the

[1] I once witnessed a third weeding carried out by collective labour in September, after an unexpected dry spell. The farmer explained to me that if the rains had been normal and ordinary farm-work not delayed, he would have carried out the third weeding in ordinary family work.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

in the dry season will sell for 1*s.* 4*d.* in the rains. In these two busiest months of the year, then, the profits of the blacksmiths may be as much as 7*d.* on every hoe, or over 1*s.* a day (one man can produce two hoes a day). The blacksmiths of the *Dokodza* group in Bida seem very satisfied with their economic situation. But the blacksmiths in the country, and also the blacksmiths of the other, smaller, guild sections in Bida, are bitterly complaining of the decline of native blacksmith trade. Some of these country blacksmiths have turned farmers, or have at least taken up farming on a larger scale than formerly, in order to balance the losses of their industry. This retrograde movement is due to a variety of causes. One which has affected all blacksmith groups in the country equally, is the competition of European trade. Thus the Nupe blacksmiths have lost almost their entire trade in bush-knives to the European trading-stores; nor does the once very extensive trade in Bida hoes which the Hausa caravans used to take north exist any more. The iron smelters have suffered most severely under this competition. As we have seen, their work has been almost completely disorganized under the pressure of European competition. Other causes affect the blacksmiths in the country more than in the town, and smaller groups more than larger. The scarcity of money among the peasants has forced certain farmers in Kutigi, for example, who were unable to pay in money for the hoes which they needed, to offer a half-day's work on the farms of the blacksmiths in lieu of payment.[1] Closer intercourse and the increased facilities of transport between town and country have also deflected some of the former custom of the village blacksmiths to Bida, where, owing to the presence of the European trading-stores, there is less danger of a shortage of raw iron occurring in the busiest time of the year. A final, more subtle, cause of the decline in blacksmith trade, which attacks smaller groups more severely than larger, lies in the failure of the former to meet successfully the demands of what we have called 'maintenance of labour'. This influence will become clear when we examine the second aspect of co-operation in native industries, namely, the co-operative organization of the professional group at large.

Guild Organization

The term 'guild' is applied correctly only to the Bida blacksmiths, whose organization shows the characteristic features of the guild system —the closed profession, centralized control, the hierarchy of ranks and grades. However, the individual blacksmith groups in Nupe, in Bida as well as in the villages, are all modelled on very similar lines—although the guild sections in Bida are organized on a larger scale, and also more closely and efficiently. Moreover, the control of the Bida guild system extends in certain respects over the whole country and the various independent local blacksmith groups. This widest professional unit is the result of political rather than economic factors; it is expressed mainly in

[1] Prices in the country are higher than in Bida. In Kutigi a heavy hoe is sold for 1*s.* to 1*s.* 6*d.* The difference in price seems chiefly due to the fact that the Kutigi blacksmiths must obtain their iron through middlemen who bring it from Bida, as there is no European store in the village.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

326 467 prevent friction in his body of workers. He is also the agency through which important large orders reach the group. On a smaller scale this task also falls to the heads of the other blacksmith groups. But in the case of the guild-head it gains special significance; for these 'royal blacksmiths' worked for the largest customer of the country, the Nupe court. They could be certain of a constant large demand, e.g. for tools for the farm-hands working for the king, or various iron implements needed in the royal household, for horse bits and stirrups for the king's horses, or flint-locks for the guns of the bodyguard. These orders are given by the king or court officials to the *Dokodza*, who then distributes the work among the craftsmen of his group according to their capacity and skill, or, if the order proves too large, among the workers in other guild sections as well. The *Dokodza* also receives the payment for this work, and keeps the largest share; the rest of the money is divided equally among the whole guild section, whether they have been working on this particular job or not.[1] These royal orders have been greatly reduced recently, not only because many of the implements needed are obtained nowadays from the European stores, but also because many of the requirements of the royal household are now catered for by the Public Works Department in Bida. But when the present *Etsu* built his new house, in 1935, he ordered nails and brackets for all doors from the *Dokodza* people.

326 467 178 The part played by the guild-head (and to a lesser extent by the sectional heads) in providing labour and capital for his group explains the authority which he exercises over his fellow workers, and also his ability to act in certain circumstances as their 'financier'. On the other hand, the close co-operative organization of the guild section reveals itself as a device to meet these regular demands upon the production of the group. Here we can attempt to explain why the smaller guild sections in Bida (and similarly the village groups of blacksmiths) have suffered more severely under modern economic changes than did the *Dokodza* group. The size of the groups is itself significant. Only the privileged group of the 'royal blacksmiths' evolved a large-scale professional organization; the other groups, which did not have the same access to constant large-scale demands upon production, remained small, and more loosely organized. Now, we can assume that these smaller groups also obtained formerly a sufficient demand for their products from various sources. It may also be that their sources have failed sooner, and more completely, than the source with which the *Dokodza* people could reckon—the continued orders from the royal household are evidence of this. But these unequal changes are less significant in their direct effect upon production (which may be negligible)[2] than in their indirect effect,

[1] How, on the other hand, the authority of the guild-head can be adapted to new situations is illustrated in the following instance. When I went to inspect the furnaces of the iron-ore miners near Bida, I had to obtain a guide through the *Dokodza*. On our return to Bida the guide at once showed the money which I had paid him to the guild-head; though he was allowed to keep it he could not have done so without first informing the guild-head, who could have deducted a part of the money.

[2] The order for nails and brackets for the royal house which we mentioned above brought in only 2*s.* and a gift of food.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

through the medium of labour organization. The royal orders, though at present small and irregular, still mobilize the group organization of the *Dokodza* people in the traditional way. The general weakening of the guild organization brought about by recent economic and political changes, which is clearly visible in the decline of the authority of guild-head and sectional heads, has thus affected the largest and strongest group less than the smaller, and already weaker, guild sections. In their case the group organization has, in fact, been reduced beyond the margin of safety. We have seen that Nupe blacksmith work demands comparatively large group co-operation for a successful maintenance of labour (in all its aspects). In a weakened organization, a markedly reduced co-operative group, maintenance of labour becomes increasingly difficult. This is what happened in the case of the smaller blacksmith groups. And this difficulty, while not sufficient in itself to disrupt the labour organization, would yet weaken its resistance to the effects of economic change—a decline in trade, the competition of European goods—effects which (at least for the time being) have passed by the larger and more strongly organized section.

We can quote several instances of this: the division of labour which enables a workshop, say, of four men, to continue work while two of the men prepare charcoal is impossible in a small working unit, and a valuable working day, possibly in the busiest time of the year, must be sacrificed. Or a workshop may have to interrupt its work when iron ore runs out and new raw material has to be fetched from the iron-ore miners—a task which, in large-scale co-operation, can be performed by one man for a number of workshops without deranging the work of the group. I have even witnessed cases in which work had been interrupted, or reduced to small repairs, because the workers had no money to buy raw materials; in a large co-operative group money would have been found more easily, especially with the help of the guild-head. In Kutigi I saw one of the two local blacksmith workshops left dilapidated for a whole year because the workers could not muster sufficient labour. The most conspicuous example of all is that of the iron-ore miners who had let their means of production, their furnaces, fall into disuse.

BRASS- AND SILVERSMITHS

The Nupe brass-smiths—*tswata muku*—reside almost exclusively in Bida. The only place outside Bida where brass-smiths have settled is Kacha, the rich trading-place, where these craftsmen from Bida hoped to find a profitable market. There are two groups of brass-smiths in Bida, one in the quarter of *Etsu* Masaba and one in the *Etsu* Usman quarter. The latter has lost its former importance. In technical skill both groups are equal, as I could test for myself; as regards work and design of the traditional type the group in the *Etsu* Usman quarter seems the more efficient. Yet its decline, unmerited though it was, is not difficult to understand. It was partly due to political factors. The group in the *Etsu* Usman quarter flourished during the régime of *Etsu* Bello, who was of the dynasty associated with this part of the town, and also under *Etsu*

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

time 5*d*. Evidently, only a man who possesses some capital can assume the role of contractor, and the ordinary beadworker can hardly hope, with his daily wages of 1½*d*., ever to attain this position. In a few cases I have found two contractors in the same workshop; but many other workshops numbered no 'capitalist' among their workers. In a situation of this kind two other methods are open to the beadworkers: either they buy the crude beads on credit from the traders and pay them back after they have sold the finished article; or they undertake the 'refining' work on a piece-contract for a trader in beads—the Hausa or Arab trader, or sometimes a 'capitalist' woman of the beadworker's family. In neither case does the work of the beadworkers include *efakó* work, even on the smallest scale. All work is done individually, and even unmarried young men are working on their own, being assigned by the contractor a task suitable to their skill and experience. The beadworkers, finally, do not practise farming in addition to the handicraft.

Formerly it was the family head and, on a larger scale, the guild-master who assumed regularly the role of contractor and financier. As in all other crafts the guild-head made himself responsible for 'maintenance of labour' in the group, which means that he undertook to provide the necessary working capital and credit and to distribute the work effectively among the craftsmen. The guild-head, called *Majĩ*, Master, also acted as the agent of the king in all matters concerning the trade in beads. When the foreign traders in precious stones arrived in Bida, they would not take their goods at once to the public market, but would show them first to the guild-head of the *lantana*, who would select what he needed, and what he thought suitable for the king and court. He would take the collection of newly arrived beads to the king and advise him on the purchase; then, receiving the order for the 'refining' of the beads, he would distribute the work among the workshops of the *lantana* paying the workers the usual piece-rate and keeping a large commission for himself. The constant demands of the court—the requirements of the fashionable ladies in the harems of Nupe royalty, bride-price and dowry (of which chains of beads form an essential part) which the king pays for innumerable relations and dependants—kept the beadworkers of Bida busy. Orders amounting to £5 and more at a time, which secured the *Majĩ* a commission of £1, were by no means rare. The profits made in this fashion enabled the guild-head to finance the ordinary work of his group and to offer them credit for the purchase of their 'raw material'. In these times of prosperity the individual worker who desired to act himself as contractor could without difficulty obtain large credits (up to £1 or £2) from the Hausa bead traders. The guild organization and the strong financial position of the guild-head were evidently regarded as sufficient security.

All this is a thing of the past. The court no longer buys beads from the beadworker guild. European beads, cheaper and much more attractive in shape and colouring,[1] have crushed the native industry. With the decline of the financial position of the guild-head, outside credit

[1] Some of the European beads which are sold in the markets of Nigeria are, in fact, specially manufactured as copies of the native style.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

has also disappeared. The result is a complete disintegration of the guild system. The guild-head, no longer able to act as financier and contractor, has lost his position of authority; as his contribution to the productive organization of the group was concerned exclusively with these financial and credit operations, the very *raison d'être* of a guild-head has disappeared. This is evident in the manner in which the *Maji* is treated by the other craftsmen; no one pays the slightest attention to him. Since he is too old now to earn money, he is supported by his son —but this is entirely a family matter, and in no way concerns the professional group at large. He receives no gifts or shares in the profits, not so much as an occasional present of kola-nuts, which even in the greatly weakened guild organization of the weavers still marks the privileged position of the guild-head. If I have called this change in the productive organization of the beadworkers a decline and disintegration, it is also felt as such by the people themselves. To them, it appears as the sad decline of a once highly respected and well-organized craft: as one of them said, 'the beadworkers to-day live from hand to mouth; their *Maji* has no longer any authority; theirs is an unlucky trade' (*gwa ɛi*, lit. an unlucky hand).

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

men are always ready to try their hand at something new, and changes of profession are frequent. The record is held, perhaps, by a Bida man who started as a mat-maker (the occupation of his older brother), changed over to cushion-making, then to tailoring, and eventually to leather-work, which he found more lucrative and which he is practising at present. *Efakó* co-operation on the narrowest basis, between father and unmarried sons, occurs occasionally. Thus in a family of embroiderers a father and two sons worked together; working on the same gown, the father would execute the more elaborate designs, while his two sons carried out the simpler embroidery; the sons were maintained by the father, and all earnings went to him. With simpler kind of work, this co-operation is reduced further, and we find, for example, this arrangement between a father and his unmarried son, both straw-hat makers: the father took half of his son's earnings, and in return maintained him, and would in due course pay part of his bride-price (he would be unable to bear the full expense). But in the majority of cases this rudimentary co-operation, too, disappears, and even unmarried sons work entirely on their own.

One might wonder whether these 'individualistic' crafts have not, at some previous stage, shown a larger measure of co-operative organization. Remembering the weakening of guild-organized crafts under the pressure of modern conditions, we might, in fact, ask whether the individual crafts as we find them to-day do not represent merely a final stage of that incipient disintegration. This is indeed the case in one of the industries practised to-day as individual crafts—leather-work. Leather-work involves specialized technique and skill in much higher measure than do the other individual handicrafts. But it also used to involve comparatively large-scale co-operation of a group of workers, in the sense of an efficient division of labour, which was meant to ensure the execution of large and frequently urgent orders. A guild-head, called *Magají*, organized and controlled group production; he also acted as the official intermediary between the craftsmen and the king, who was, again, their most important customer: for the Bida leather-workers supplied a large proportion of the military equipment of the Nupe army, such as saddlery and leather shields, sword-sheaths, and quivers for arrows.

The individual craft which is most a product of modern conditions is machine-tailoring. It introduces certain new features into the productive system of Nupe which are of special interest to the student of culture contact. Machine-tailoring does not demand long training or special skill—young men learn to use a sewing-machine in a week. The machine-tailor can reckon with a very constant demand for his services. The number of machine-tailors in Nupe has, in fact, greatly increased even during the periods which I spent in the country. In 1936, for example, I found six sewing-machines in Kutigi market, against three in 1934. Machine-tailors, like ordinary tailors, will regularly visit village markets (walking perhaps ten miles or more, carrying the sewing-machines on their heads), and appear in villages a fortnight or month before an annual festival, when their services will be greatly in demand.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

he will be allowed to use the drums in the house; later he will buy himself a drum of his own. No payment is taken for the tuition; but when the novice later performs at ceremonies or feasts, he will send his former teacher a small gift of money or food. The drums are made by the woodworkers on the river, who are alone in the position to obtain the suitable wood. One large drum costs 10*s*. The drummers themselves cover the drum and provide the goatskin for the diaphragm.

But all this is a thing of the past. To-day apprentices are hardly ever taken. The drummers, like so many other Nupe craftsmen, complain bitterly about the bad times. Formerly, they told me, they used to be paid 6*s*. to 8*s*. a night; to-day they receive 3*s*. for the night or, for one 'song' (played, for example, at a family feast), one kola-nut. This decline appears to be due to two factors: first, to the impact of Mohammedanism and the gradual disappearance of rituals and ceremonies in which drumming formerly played a prominent part and the songs of which were stored in the memory of the village drummers; and second, to the spreading of fashions from the capital, and the competition of the more 'refined', famous Bida drummers and musicians. The organization of the village drummers has survived only in the names of the guild ranks. The drummers, who once devoted only their spare time to farming, are to-day mainly farmers and carry on their old profession only as a sideline.

In Bida drumming and music were never tied to the narrow scope of limited traditional occasions; nor was the development of the artistic style rigidly hemmed in ritual. Both the profession and the style were allowed to develop freely, and the result is an impressive variety in artistic production and in its social counterpart, the organization of the craft. The Bida practice also introduces a completely novel element into the traditional craft, namely, music and dancing executed by professional women dancers and singers. A number of performers, drummers and women singers (who rarely come of one family or household) associate with one another, and form themselves into a 'band' or 'company'. In this form they become known, are invited to perform at feasts and similar occasions, and also tour the country, sometimes even going abroad to other large towns in Nigeria where Nupe music always finds an appreciative public.[1] In constant co-operation the 'company' builds up its special 'repertory' and evolves its individual style. There are several such 'companies' in Bida, each with its special repertory, style, and technique. They are known by the name of their leader, or by the name of the style in which they have specialized. Thus we find the group of the drummer Sogba, or the group of the woman singer Fati, or a group called *zawóro* (lit. 'new man'), so called because it performs in a style only developed since the days of the 'new men', i.e. the British. One or the other 'company' is known to be patronized by a certain noble family and will be summoned at every occasion when the services of drummers and dancers are required, a name-giving ceremony, a wedding, or an age-grade festivity. Certain drummers even enter a kind of *bara* relation with a nobleman

[1] I met a company of Bida drummers and women singers, whom I had known in Bida, in Lagos, where they were 'on tour'.

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
FF52 Nupe FF52

pairs of broadly contrasted categories of wide applicability and with four series of eight, which are relatively easy to remember. In interpreting these series, the diviner will always take into account whether his client is a man or a woman. Thus, if the sign to be interpreted belongs to series 1 (meaning 'success') and series 4 ('concerning women'), and occurs in the consultation of a man, the diviner will conclude that his client will be successful in finding a wife. If the same combination occurs in the case of a female client, it will probably mean that she will be prosperous in business. If the sign belongs to series 1 and 3 ('concerning men'), and occurs in the case of a male client, the latter will 'gain reputation and rank'. If the sign belongs to series 2 (meaning 'misfortune') and 4 ('concerning women') and occurs in the case of a female client, it might mean that she will have a difficult pregnancy, and so forth. 787

It is clear that in this flexible system of divination the diviner will be guided by the particular case of his client much more fully than is his pagan colleague; in fact, the system of divination itself acknowledges the importance at least of the sex of the client. Also, the diviner has several methods of calculation at his disposal and is free to choose the less complicated one provided it still offers a plausible prophecy. This is borne out by the existence of an optional, final rule which reduces the whole system of divination to a simple mechanical procedure. This rule lays down that all signs which have a single dot at the top and a double dot at the base, so that they 'point away' from the diviner, bear an adverse prophecy; while all signs of the opposite design, 'pointing inward', are propitious. If the diviner uses this simplified method exclusively he will consider only the 'houses' that bear on the client's question and phrase his reply accordingly. In a consultation I watched the diviner was asked if the client would recover some goods that had been stolen. The diviner looked at 'house' 2, meaning 'wealth', at 'house' 9, meaning 'voyage' (since the goods had been 'carried away'), at 'house' 12, 'enemy', and at 'houses' 13 and 14, implying 'success'. The signs at 2 and 13 were inconclusive; the signs at 9 and 12 pointed outward; only the sign at 14 had a propitious meaning. The answer was, quite plausibly, that it was no good looking for the thieves; the client might be successful if he could follow them; but this was difficult since they had by then left the town with their loot.

Perhaps the most striking feature of Nupe sand-divining is the contrast between its pretentious theoretical framework and its primitive and slipshod application in practice. In some respects the 'theory' simply evaporates in the 'practice', as in the high-sounding Arabic nomenclature which gives way to common Nupe 787 182 178

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
FF52 Nupe FF52

expressions or in the astrological notions of which no use is ever made. The practice is clearly meant to cope with the relevant problems and interests of Nupe social life; and these, let us note, are now typical, not only of a Mohammedan community, but also of a highly urbanized one. There is no longer any mention of rain, of the prospects of hunting, or of the influence of *kuti*; instead, we find references to 'writing and prayer', to mallams and barber-doctors, to 'the whole town in strife', and the strong emphasis on travel and trade, including travel and trade 'concerning women'.

The discrepancy between the theoretical framework of *hati* and its practical application suggests once more an attempt to assimilate the Mohammedan system to local conditions. The attempt is crude and unambitious, stopping far short of anything like a true synthesis; rather, any feature which cannot readily be assimilated is left on one side and only nominally acknowledged. Occasionally even this bare acknowledgement is discarded, as is shown in this example. One diviner, able to read his Arabic book on divination, discovered in it a new rule which distinguished between 'fixed' and 'movable' stars and operated with series of seven and the corresponding permutations. The diviner frankly admitted that he did not fully understand the rule: consequently he simply ignored it, not even borrowing the new nomenclature.

7. CONCLUSIONS: DREAM INTERPRETATION

I have called the guidance offered by divination mechanical and of a case-to-case kind. The preceding discussion will have borne out this description. Nupe divination is concerned less with foreknowledge in its own right than with resolving the problems and obscurities of the moment. The diviner can discover and disentangle some of the hidden influences which are at work always and everywhere, and can to that extent predict—piecemeal, and illuminating only the immediate future: he cannot uncover any more embracing design. Indeed, as we know, there is no such design in this non-committal and fundamentally amoral religion. Yet within the limits set to it divination has a part to play, providing some of the certainty and guidance required for provident action. We may call Nupe divination a concession or compromise; for as its scope is so restricted by the logic of Nupe religious thought, the fact that it exists at all, is a concession exacted by the practical needs of human life.

Let us note that religion itself adds to these needs. We spoke of the 'proliferation' of Nupe religious thought which crowds the universe with supernatural agencies overlapping in their effects and multiplies the supernatural aids, so that their appropriateness

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
FF52 Nupe FF52

makes a younger brother or, in the absence of surviving brothers, the eldest brother's son the main heir, excluding wives and daughters. It must be borne in mind that the main property in rural Nupe is land, worked co-operatively by a 'house', that is, by the male members of the extended family—a man, his younger brothers, and his and their sons.[1] The traditional rules of inheritance thus prevent the fragmentation of land and keep intact the large labour team bound to it; for the land descends together with the headship of the family group, and thus with the command over the 'house' and labour team.[2] The acceptance of the Islamic rules of inheritance would change all this: the land would be progressively fragmented, the labour team broken up, and the headship of large families would disappear. But the Nupe have not turned to the new system in summary fashion; they still exclude wives and daughters from inheritance and largely kept intact the succession to the titular headship of the 'house'. But that most critical innovation, the division of landed property among sons, has steadily been gaining ground. It is important to note, however, that this is not simply a result of the pressure of Islam. I have shown elsewhere how the political and economic changes which began with the Fulani conquest and continue to the present day encouraged individual as against family enterprise and deprived the productive organization of the large family group of its former economic advantages.[3] My point now is that the 'individualistic' type of inheritance exemplified in Islam was also the type the new situation demanded, so that the changed outlook which happened to coincide with the impact of Islam provided additional motives for its acceptance, or for the acceptance of the way of life it represents.

In a wider sense the mere presence of the new religion in such circumstances answered the 'demand of the situation'. The political and economic events which were disrupting family co-operation also assailed the whole authority of family heads and their hold over the younger generation. In consequence the latter, sons or younger brothers of men still pagan, were turning away from the traditional cults (and are doing so even today), not for any particular benefits they were expecting of Islam, but because there was logic in the mere 'turning-away'; for this meant abandoning religious practices which, more or less openly, stood for the *status quo*, for parental authority and an outmoded family structure. The great appeal of the *navū*, which concedes greater freedom to

[1] See *A Black Byzantium*, chap. III.

[2] This situation is somewhat modified among the craftsmen in the town (see op. cit., chap. XIV). The conclusions drawn further on, however, apply to the labour teams of craftsmen as much as of peasants.

[3] Op. cit., pp. 124, 374–6.

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
FF52 Nupe FF52

youth, or of the *salla*, which is silent on issues of family authority, is the obverse of this picture.

Here I am repeating facts mentioned previously, though the emphasis is now not on the 'vulnerability' of the older cults in the face of change, but on their dislodgment by the new religion in the country.[1] Islam, as we have seen, proved the stronger mainly because these other changes had prepared the ground; it was a beneficiary of the social upheaval as much as a cause contributing to it. Differently expressed, Islam acted in the manner of a new model, inviting to be followed since it happened to appear at a critical moment, when older norms were breaking down. To be sure, it was a model doubly inviting; it both typified upper-class behaviour and offered alternatives for usages no longer satisfactory, and hence placed a premium on non-conformism. Without it, the dissatisfactions might not have crystallized so easily and the process of change would have been more erratic. As it happened, they found a ready focus or 'model'.

We turn to the final aspect of the Moslem 'way of life', the attitude of the believer towards other creeds. I have called Nupe religion tolerant. Islam, as we know it from other parts of the world, is the exact opposite. It has all the self-righteousness and intransigence of a fervently proselytizing creed; and it lays claim not only to the exclusive possession of spiritual truth but also to an ultimate ascendancy over all other religions—to the 'inheritance of the earth', promised to the believers and meant to be secured by secular domination and 'victory in the field'.[2] In Africa, where Islam now faces pagan peoples as it did in its early history, this claim to supremacy must stand in a literal sense, meaning the superiority of believers over utter unbelievers, of people who have seen the light over mere barbarians, and of Lords and Masters over some lower species of humanity. In the Sudan, for example, this attitude is well marked. But in Nupe there is, by and large, little trace of it.

Undoubtedly, all Moslems pride themselves on being true believers and many, more or less contemptuously, look down upon the pagans. But as I mentioned before, scholarly mallams will yet frankly admit their interest in the pagan cults; few would consider it incongruous or invidious to discuss, in a purely academic spirit, the beliefs and practices of the 'unbelievers'; and the average Nupe Moslem views them as tolerantly. Nor would a Mohammedan bar all social intimacy with pagans (as I have seen it done in half-Mohammedanized parts of the Sudan) or decline to visit them in their houses or receive their visits in his. Even friendship occurs

[1] See above, pp. 97–114.
[2] See D. S. Margulies, *Mohammed*, 1939, pp. 67–8.

4: Temple G-4 (no date) 1922
FF52 Nupe FF52

sons, his whole brothers, and his daughters in a fixed and decreasing proportion. If the children are infants the money is held in trust for them by the brothers of the deceased. A woman's money is inherited in the same way, but either sex may leave their money as they choose, by declaring their wishes in the presence of a large number of responsible witnesses. If there is no family, a woman may inherit from her husband, and in some cases where there are no children, and she is known to have been a specially good wife, the brothers of the deceased forego their right in her favour. If she has no children her property goes to her husband. In no case does an illegitimate child inherit.

In old times the people did not dare live outside walled villages, but the neighbouring lands were apportioned by the village-head amongst the various heads of families, according to the amount he and his could beneficially occupy. The family-head in his turn granted the right of occupancy to individuals of his family, and, as no tree was of value before the virgin forest was cleared, each occupant had also the right to the sylvan produce of his land. As, however, virgin forest diminished and land became less plentiful, the heads reserved the use of the oil-palm to themselves, though at one time they held it in trust for the Emir.

Land cannot be sold, but it may be redistributed either on the migration of the holder, or on the extinction of the whole family. The village-head has a right to ask the family-head to give him back some land that he may grant it to a new comer, always supposing that this land is not at the time fully occupied. The right of occupancy passes on the death of the holder to the successive head of the family.

Amongst the pagan Nupe* the guardian spirit "Gunu" is worshipped. Sheep, dogs and fowls are sacrificed in his honour, their blood being poured out as a libation to him, whilst their flesh is consumed by the worshippers. Every eleven months the men go to his altar, beneath which sacred relics have been buried since time immemorial, where they kneel down in a wide circle, joining hands, and bowing their foreheads to the ground. The Elders address the spirit, and a feast and special dance follows. Other festivals are held at harvest time, and on the appointment of a new head-man, each village head-man being also village priest. There is a semi-religious institution called "Ndakogboiya." A meeting is held at the Chief's house, when a man may complain of his wife's conduct and beg that she may be taken to task, together with any other ill-doer. A man then mounts on stilts, and appears amongst the people after dark, proclaiming their evil deeds, and receiving propitiatory

* Sapke and Mokwa.

5: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1947
FF52 Nupe FF52
Kede

the Kede to force the tributary of the Niger on which Katcha is situated and to occupy the town. The people of Katcha, under allegiance to Bida, claimed protection for their territorial rights from the central government. The Kede were routed by a Fulani army, and the political rights of the Katcha people restored.[1]

The feud between the Kede and the Emirs of Bida, and, above all, the strategic position in the defence of the kingdom which the river tribe occupied, was utilized in the Royal Niger Company campaign against Bida in 1897. With promises of political autonomy to the tribe and the chieftainship to the ambitious nephew of the ruling *Kuta*, Sir William Wallace, the commanding officer of the Niger Company troops, secured the support of the Kede. Their canoe fleet was placed under the command of a gunboat and massed on the river south of Bida; with their help, the relieving force of the Nupe, which at the time was engaged in a war in the south, was cut off and Bida captured. The Kede received the promised reward and were granted semi-autonomy, being made responsible directly to the British Administration instead of to their former overlords, the Emirs of Bida.

The political status of the Kede was later changed again. The *Kuta* lost a considerable portion of his territory when the new provinces and divisions were mapped out (1900–1905). At the same time, his autonomous position was curtailed, and Kede country placed again under Bida. A last element of autonomy is preserved in the regulation that the District Headship of Kede District should remain vested in the Kede chief.

The adoption of this curtailed autonomy for the purposes of modern government has not been an unqualified success. Administrative officers have had cause to complain of the declining authority of the Kede chief. The more evident supports of Kede chieftainship—the dynastic title, the privileged economic position of the chief (a comparatively high salary having taken the place of the former share in taxes and tributes), and his control over the officials of his State—have not been affected so fundamentally

[1] This first attempt was carried out in the early days of the Royal Niger Company. The second, successful, attempt of the Kede to gain a foothold in the Katcha River was carried out under an administration favourably disposed towards Kede expansion, and led to the peaceful occupation of the riverside at Katcha mentioned previously. This 'peaceful penetration', however, is hardly less resented by the Katcha people, who have lost through it their formerly undisturbed fishing grounds.

5: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1947
FF52 Nupe FF52
Kede

by the political changes as to account for the decline of chiefly authority. What has changed is rather the spiritual background, the conception, of Kede autonomous chieftainship. It has lost its place in the scheme of Kede political life, which is still growth and expansion. It has been shorn of the qualities of self-responsible and exclusive leadership, which, in this dynamic society, constituted the *raison d'être* of its once absolute power. What remains of the leadership vested in the Kede chief is a leadership moving in the narrow circle of modern administrative boundaries and under the patronage of another, higher, authority. It had to surrender its prerogative of guiding and protecting the movements of the group as they followed, farther and farther afield, the lead of the general economic and cultural development of the country.

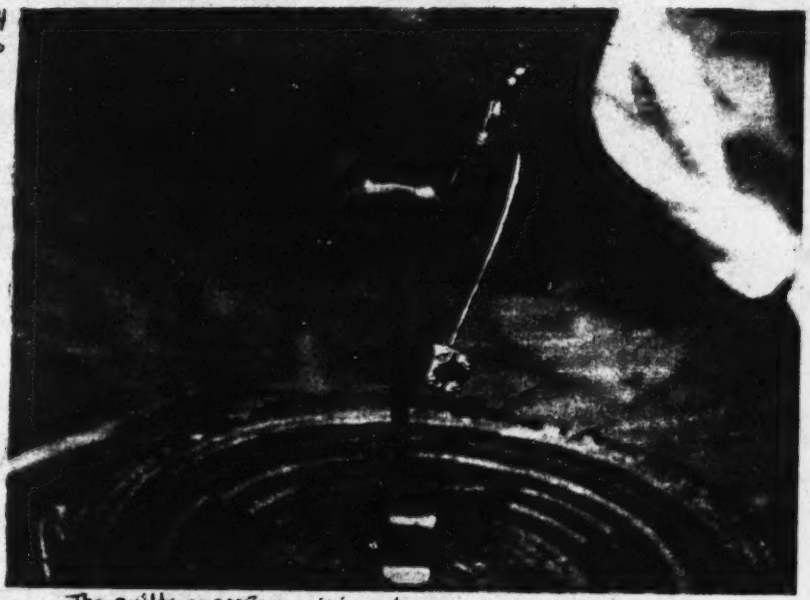
This change in the whole political existence of the Kede is most conspicuous in the Kede groups which now lie outside Bida Emirate and the area ruled over by the *Kuta*. Here the liquidation of Kede autonomy could not have been effected without disturbing consequences had Kede chieftainship still held its old meaning. Sentimental bonds between the split-off groups and the mother-country are still conspicuous; but on the whole I have gained the impression that these groups do not (or no longer) seriously miss or resent the separation, or contemplate the possibility of some future reunion. The weakened appeal of political autonomy reflects the general development, political and cultural, that has overtaken the country and separated autonomy from its vital counterparts in social life: economic and cultural unity, and the solidarity of community life. To put it differently: cultural self-realization has become possible outside the narrow political boundaries. I shall have to return to this point; but let me mention here a certain proof of the statement just made—namely, the continued, and even increasing, emigration to those distant Kede settlements which could under no circumstances be anything else but 'minorities' under alien rule.

VII. Social Stratification

The division of political rights and duties in Kede country and, implied in it, the unequal economic advantage enjoyed by the different sections of the population constitute the basis of a rigid social stratification. Ethnic and cultural differences add their

6: Anonymous U-4 (no date) 1956
"King of the dancers" — A Bida brass spinning toy. FF52 Nupe FF52 Bida

524
326



326
[933]

The guilds of craftsmen in iron, leather, and embroidery made the weapons, armour, saddle-cloths and accoutrements for the army, the agricultural workers produced food and the glass-makers produced the ornaments which formed a basis of trade when that seemed more worth while than a military operation. As is usual in a state drawing most of its profits from war and plunder, there grew in Bida a great demand for luxuries—ornamental vessels, beads and armlets, especially among the women. Many young men of Bida state, ruefully, that this taste lingers on.

326
178

This guild system was too rigid easily to withstand fundamental changes. The blacksmiths, declining in number, now confine themselves to farm implements and a few furnishings for horsemen. The brass makers turn out a wide range of flat and hollow-ware, much of it coming loosely within the luxury classification. The embroiderers turn out fine hand work on gowns and there is a beautifully decorated, bright red cloth woven by the women; but few are sold outside the town. Makers of hats and mats turn out a range of products now largely aimed at a Europeanised market.

[786]

This falling-off of the traditional demand and an (at least) partial failure to find adequate new markets has already resulted in the loss of some skills and is a grave risk to the perpetuation of many others.

323

The glass-makers, however, still work in their traditional way. The furnace is made from a clay pot heavily embedded in more clay. Into the base of the furnace are let two clay pipes of about two inches external diameter. These swell out to become bellows chambers some twelve or fifteen inches across closed by leather bags. One pumps away at them

Text continued on page 143

Nigeria: Pottery. **Nicholson.**

Bida (Nupe) Pottery. *By W. E. Nicholson.*

These notes refer to one only of the groups of potters in Bida, Niger Province, and the actual workers observed belong to Augi's house in the Quarter of Natsu.

I. *Workers.*—All the operators are women. The family came originally from Sokoto, but the mother of the present potters is said to have learnt the trade from a Yoruba woman, *i.e.*, the technique may be Yoruba or Nupe in origin. All are Mohammedans, so that the survival of tabus, etc., in the craft is not to be expected, and no trace of them was found.

Two varieties of article are made:—

(i) Small water jug, chiefly used for ablutionary purposes, called in Nupe *Masaga* (equivalent to the Hausa *Buta* or *Shastali*—Man, 1929, 34).

(ii) A larger water-container called in Nupe *Dukū-nyūtū* (equivalent to the Hausa *Pukunya*—Man 1931, 186).

The following notes refer to the former only of these.

II. *Preparation of the Clay.*—Suitable clay is found in the swamps of the Gbako river at Badeggi, about 10 miles east of Bida. Itinerant vendors from this village bring it round for sale, and it costs about 10d. per cwt. During part of the rainy season floods prevent its collection. The clay is pounded to powder in a wooden mortar identical with that used in the preparation of food. It is levigated—

(i) Usually by the addition of powdered potsherds: this powder is sifted before being added to the clay, through a sieve made of slivers of bamboo.

(ii) Sometimes native bricks of sun-dried mud are burnt and powdered and used instead of potsherds.

After the addition of the levigating material the clay is wetted until it attains the right consistency.

III. *Building of the Pot.*—(*a*) Old cloths are spread on the ground and the operator places in front of herself a flat sand-stone slab about 1 inch thick: it is said that these stones are purchased from the Bead-makers and that they come from further south in Ilorin country; they are 'natural,' *i.e.*, pieces of stratified rock which splits into suitable thicknesses; the slab is well dusted with powdered potsherds to prevent sticking. A ball of clay (*a* (i)) is placed on the slab, manipulated into a 'pancake' (*a* (ii)) and beaten out thin with a stone hand-beater; any